α—11

WELL... I AM THE ONE WHO TOLD HER TO BRING SOMETHING INTERESTING.
A FLOWER?
MAYBE FOR YASUMI-CHAN THIS FLOWER'S REALLY INTEREST-ING.
MY BRIGADE ENTRANCE EXAM DIDN'T LIE! LOOKS LIKE IT REALLY IDENTIFIED HER DISTIN-GUISHING ATTRI-BUTES!
INDEED! SUCH DECISIVE FOLLOW-UP MEANS THAT SHE'S GOT THE HEART OF A TRUE BRIGADE MEMBER.
BAN (WHAM)

The Surprise of Haruhi Suzumiya X

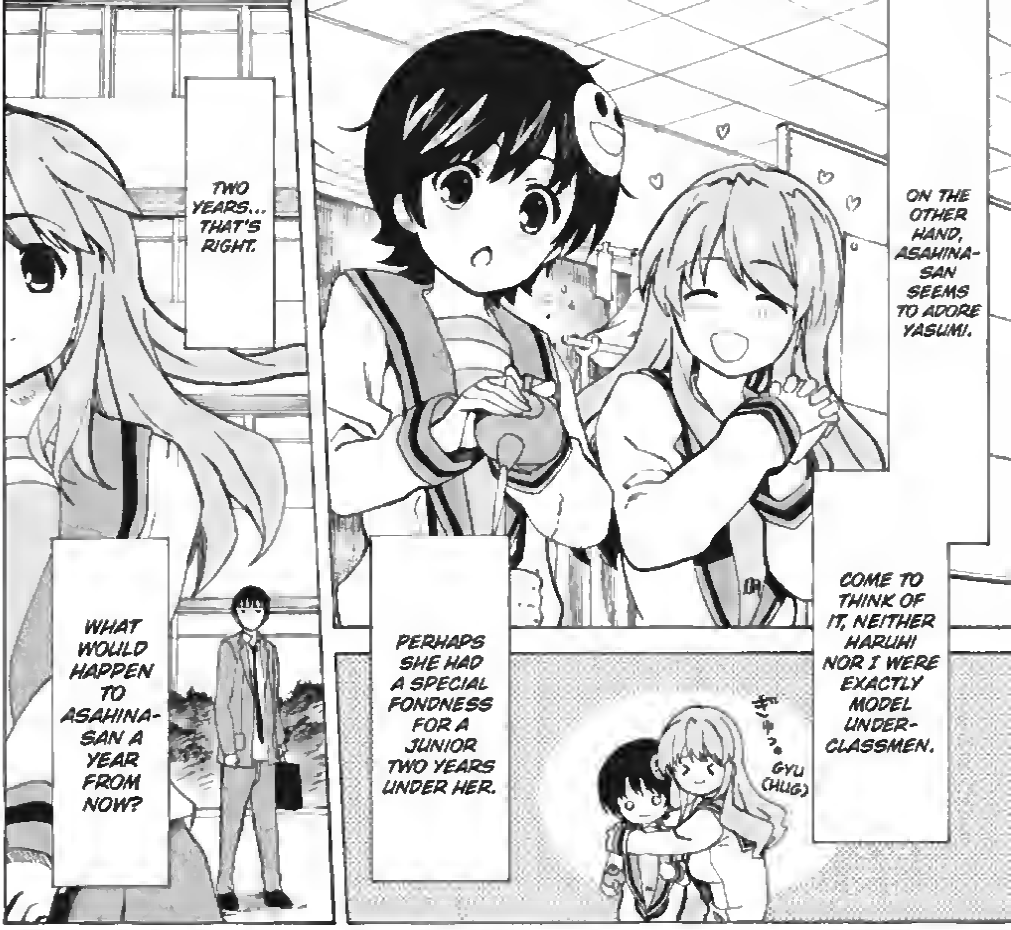
C'MON, KYON, IT'S TIME TO GO!
HURRY UP!

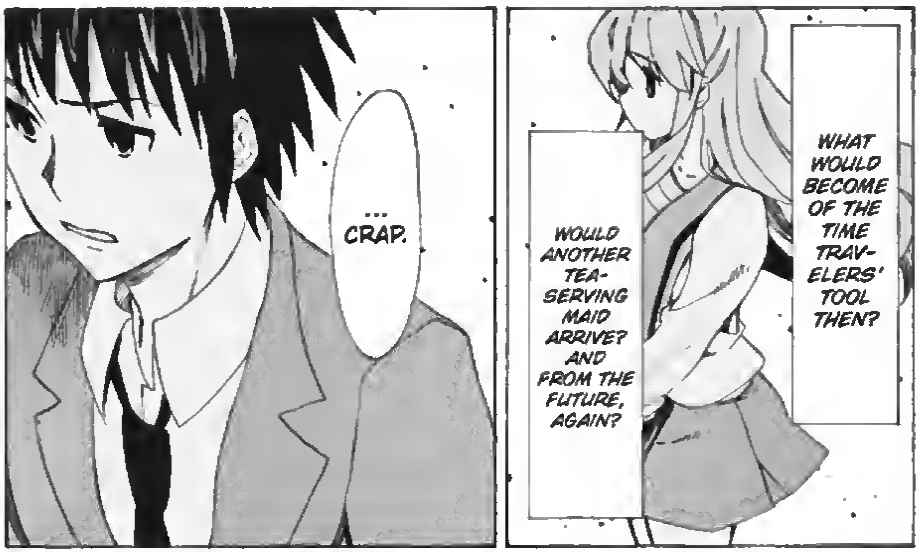
FOR EXAMPLE, THE FLOWER SHE'D LEFT AT LUNCH.
THE PAST FEW DAYS, MY STRANGE-HAPPENINGS SENSOR HAD BEEN PINGING CONSTANTLY.
I REALLY DON'T THINK HARUHI IS EXACTLY WELCOMING YASUMI WITH OPEN ARMS.
DID HARUHI REALLY LIKE THE FLOWER YASUMI HAD LEFT THERE?
I DOUBTED IT.

IN A WORD, SHE WAS CONFUSED.
THE ANSWER WAS NO.

SO DID SHE ACTUALLY FIND YASUMI'S INTRODUCTION TO THE CLUB TO BE AN UNPLEASANT DEVELOPMENT?

HAFUHI'S EVALUATION OF YASUMI WAS A COMPLICATED ONE.
AND SHE HAD YET TO COME UP WITH A SATISFACTORY ANSWER.
TRUTHFULLY, I FEEL THE SAME WAY.
CALL IT A SORT OF INDISTINCT MYSTERY.
KOIZUMI.
THAT FLOWER WASN'T WOLFSBANE, RIGHT?
NO, NO, IT'S NOT A POISONOUS FLOWER.
PAKA (FLIP)
WHEN'D YOU TAKE THAT PICTURE?
AT A GLANCE, IT LOOKED LIKE A VARIETY OF ORCHID.
I WAS CERTAINLY A BIT INTERESTED IN IT, THOUGH.
HOPEFULLY MY GUESS IS WRONG.


TWO YEARS... THAT'S RIGHT.
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO ASAHINA-SAN A YEAR FROM NOW?
PERHAPS SHE HAD A SPECIAL FONDNESS FOR A JUNIOR TWO YEARS UNDER HER.
ON THE OTHER HAND, ASAHINA-SAN SEEMS TO ADORE YASUMI.
COME TO THINK OF IT, NEITHER HARUHI NOR I WERE EXACTLY MODEL UNDER-CLASSMEN.
GYU (HUG)


... CRAP.
WOULD ANOTHER TEA-SERVING MAID ARRIVE? AND FROM THE FUTURE, AGAIN?
WHAT WOULD BECOME OF THE TIME TRAV-ELERS' TOOL THEN?

I JUST REMEMBERED I BORROWED A DIRTY MAGAZINE FROM TANIGUCHI.
I LEFT SOMETHING IN THE CLASSROOM.
OH, OOPS.
IF ANYBODY FINDS IT, I'LL BE IN TROUBLE.
IT'S, LIKE, A SUPER-VALUABLE RAG TOO.
HEH HEH HEH.
I'M HEADING BACK TO THE CLASSROOM.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT UP.
BYE!
DON'T TALK ABOUT DIRTY BOOKS IN FRONT OF MAIDENS LIKE US!
DA (DASH)
STUPID KYON!

I SHOULD'VE COME UP WITH A BETTER EXCUSE.
TA (TMP)
BUT NO, THIS IS GOOD.
IT WOULD'VE BEEN BAD IF HARUHI HAD COME WITH ME.
TA
ANYWAY, I HAVE TO GET RID OF THIS SENTI-MENTALITY.
IT'S NOT LIKE ME.
TA
TA
ESPECIALLY WITH THIS IMPORTANT (?) MEETING COMING UP.
BAN (BANG)

IT'S SIX O'CLOCK, YASUMI WATA-HASHI!
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING, SENPAI.
I KNEW YOU'D COME.
I BELIEVED IT— THAT THINGS WOULD TURN OUT THIS WAY.
AND I WANT TO BELIEVE IN WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT.
SHE'D MADE IT THROUGH ALL OF HARUHI'S TESTS.
NO NORMAL HUMAN COULD POS-SIBLY HAVE DONE THAT.

I'LL TAKE ALL MY ANSWERS UP FRONT, THANKS.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN?
YOU BELIEVE IN WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT?

I DON'T KNOW EITHER.
BUT WE'LL FIND OUT SOON.

KO
KO
KO
KO
KO
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...
...YOU DON'T KNOW?

KON
(KNOCK)
KON
KON
KON
KNOCKING!? ANOTHER VISITOR!?
KON
KON
WHAT IS SHE?
HOW DID SHE KNOW SOMEONE WAS COMING AFTER ME?
OR DID SHE CALL THEM HERE TOO...!?
KON
KON

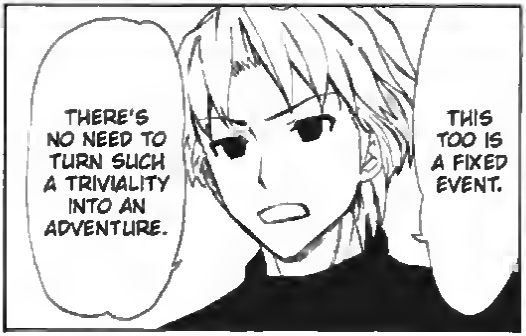
β—11
チュンチュン
CHUN (CHIRP)
CHUN
チュン
FRI-
DAY...
I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE WEEKEND'S APPROACH.
BUT WHATEVER HAPPENS AFTER SCHOOL MAY DECIDE BOTH MY FATE AND THE SOS BRIGADE'S.
UGH...
A RENDEZ-VOUS WITH SASAKI AND HER ROTTEN FRIENDS AWAITED ME.
WAKE UP!
I WOULD NEED TO BE MORE AWAKE, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY.

I HAVE TO SETTLE THINGS WITH KUYOH SUOH.
FOR WHAT PURPOSE HAD THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL FORCED NAGATO INTO BED REST?
I HAVE TO SETTLE THINGS WITH FUJIWARA.
WHY DID THAT TIME TRAVELER COME HERE?
DID THE FAKE ESPER REALLY WANT TO INSTALL SASAKI AS THE TRUE GOD...?
I HAVE TO SETTLE THINGS WITH KYOKO TACHIBANA.
I DON'T KNOW.
SOMETHING HUGE, FAR LARGER THAN BEFORE.
BUT SOMETHING IS DEFINITELY GOING TO HAPPEN AFTER SCHOOL TODAY.

AFTER SCHOOL, AT THE RENDEZ-VOUS POINT.
HEY.
YOU SHOWED UP LIKE YOU PROMISED.
THANKS.
SASAKI.
TACHIBANA, AND THE TIME TRAVELER.
KUYOH'S NOT HERE.
I COULDN'T CONTACT HER.
BUT IF SHE'S NEEDED, SHE'LL APPEAR.
THAT SO?
SEEMS KINDA HALF-BAKED.

SHE'LL COME... SHE WILL.
PERA
WHETHER OR NOT ANYONE WANTS HER TO.
IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ME WISH I NEVER HAD TO DEAL WITH HER AGAIN.
PERA
MUST BE NICE TO HAVE THAT KIND OF FREEDOM.
EARTH DOESN'T BELONG TO ALIENS...
PERA (BLAB)
PERA
UH, ER...
WHAT'S UP WITH HIM? HIS EXPRESSION'S SO STIFF.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMING TODAY.
I'VE ARRANGED FOR A TAXI.
SHALL WE DEPART?

WHERE TO?
NORTH PREFECTURAL HIGH SCHOOL.


THIS TOO IS A FIXED EVENT.
THERE'S NO NEED TO TURN SUCH A TRIVIALITY INTO AN ADVENTURE.

WE'RE JUST GOING RIGHT BACK?
I JUST GOT HERE.
HMPH.

SHUT UP.

...

THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU'VE BEEN RATHER ABUSED BY THE WHIMS OF TIME TRAVELERS, HAVEN'T YOU?
LILI

A FIXED EVENT, EH? SO THE FOUR OF US GETTING IN A TAXI AND GOING TO NORTH HIGH IS A MATTER OF HISTORICAL FACT?
LILILILI (VRMM)

UH-HUH...
MY KID'S JUST STARTED SIXTH GRADE.
HE'S ALREADY STUDYING CONSTANTLY!
SO, YOU GUYS IN HIGH SCHOOL? NICE TO BE YOUNG!
FOR NOW WE'VE HIRED A NEIGHBORHOOD HIGH SCHOOLER TO COME AND TUTOR HIM...
WE'VE TRIED SENDING HIM TO CRAM SCHOOL, BUT HE STOPPED GOING, SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT THE LEVEL BEING TOO LOW.
HE'S REALLY INTO SCIENCE AND CHEMISTRY, ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT THESE COMPLICATED THINGS...
THE TUTOR KINDA TAKES A HANDS-OFF APPROACH AND I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...
LIKE DOODLES ALMOST.
IF HE'S GOT A NOTEBOOK HE'S ALWAYS WRITING FIGURES AND EQUATIONS INTO IT...
HAW HAW HAW!
BUT HIS SCHOOL GRADES JUST WON'T GO UP.
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT A CHATTY CABBIE.

ANYWAY, I FEEL LIKE I'VE HEARD THE CAB-DRIVER'S STORY BEFORE...
NOT THAT IT MATTERS, BUT. .
AND UNLIKE KOIZUMI'S AGENCY, HER FINANCIAL SITUATION MIGHT NOT BE ESPECIALLY ROSY.
OH, IS THAT SO?
BUUU (VRMMM)
TAXI
UNLIKE KOIZUMI, SHE PROBABLY HAD TO PAY FOR THE CAB OUT OF HER OWN POCKET.
WE JUST HAVE TO CONFIRM SOMETHING.
IT'S NOT A TRAP.
IS THIS SOME KIND OF TRAP?
THOSE ARE PERFECTLY REASONABLE QUESTIONS, FUJIWARA-KUN, BUT...
BUT OF COURSE THAT POSSIBILITY HAS BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR.
THERE MAY NOT BE ANYONE THERE...
I JUST KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS EITHER.
THIS IS BOTH THE PLAN AND THE RESULT.

I CAN ONLY GUESS AT WHAT YOUR FUTURE WORLD IS LIKE.
BUT I'LL BET YOU'RE NOT USED TO RIDING AROUND IN PETROLEUM-BASED INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE-POWERED VEHICLES LIKE THIS ONE, ARE YOU?
I'M STARTING TO WONDER IF YOU JUST DON'T LIKE RIDING IN CARS VERY MUCH.
WHAT OF IT?
NOTHING AT ALL.
THERE ARE SIMPLY ADVANCED HOPES I HAVE FOR THE FUTURE, THAT'S ALL.
THIS WORLD IS BESET BY ALL SORTS OF PROB-LEMS.
I HOPE THAT SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN SOLVED IN THE FUTURE...
HOPE FOR WHAT YOU LIKE.
WISH FOR WHAT YOU LIKE.

THAT HOPE OF YOURS MADE THE FUTURE...
...ALONG WITH YOUR RECKLESSLY MISPLACED CONFIDENCE.
BEYOND THAT...HEH, I SUPPOSE IT'S CLASSIFIED.
UU (VRRM)
CLASSIFIED INFOR-MATION... I DON'T THINK SO.
THIS IS A FIXED EVENT.
BUT YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.
UU
U
ALL YOU KNOW IS THAT IT'S BEEN SPECIFIED IN ADVANCE THAT YOU HAVE TO GO TO NORTH HIGH.
SO HOW COULD YOU EVEN ANSWER?
IMPRES-SIVE.
IF YOU WERE OTHERWISE, YOU WOULDN'T BE QUALIFIED TO ACT AS OUR INSTRUMENT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "INSTRUMENT"?
THIS IS THE FIRST I'VE HEARD OF THAT.
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND SOON ENOUGH.
YOU'RE ESSENTIALLY SUPERFLUOUS.
BUT IT'S NOT OUR HABIT TO OPPOSE FIXED EVENTS, SO.....
SO WE CALLED YOU ALONG TOO.
JUST SIT BACK AND ENJOY YOUR ROLE AS THE BYSTANDER.
GRR...
...HEY, FUJIWARA.
ARE YOU TRYING TO CHANGE THE FUTURE YOU'RE FROM?
YOU KNOW THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, RIGHT?
DOODLING ON ONE PAGE OF A FLIPBOOK ANIMATION WON'T CHANGE THE ENDING.

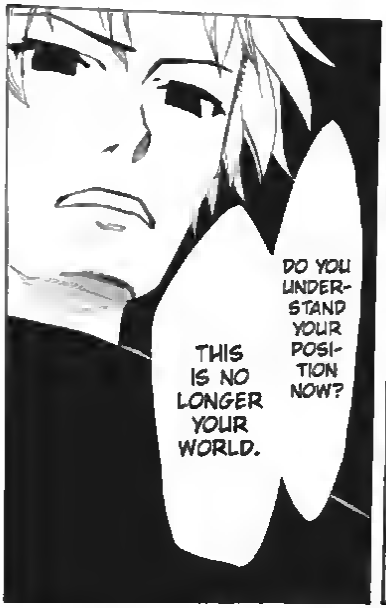
IF YOU SHOOT OFF YOUR MOUTH ANY MORE...
...
"PROHIBITION" WON'T BE ENOUGH TO PROTECT YOU.
JUST SHUT UP, YOU RELIC.

HIS COLD VOICE MADE ME SHIVER.
GUESS I STEPPED ON ONE OF HIS LAND MINES.
RURURU (BRMMM)
TAXI
FUJIWARA WAS SERIOUS.

WHAT...
WHAT'S THIS?
C'MON, LET'S GO.
CHA (CHAK)
IF SO...
...JUST WHAT KIND OF GRAFFITI WAS THIS GUY GOING TO LEAVE ON THE PAST?

ばっ
BA
(WHIP)

CLOSED SPACE!?
THE TOTAL OPPOSITE OF HARUHI'S...
HA (GASP)
BAN (BAM)

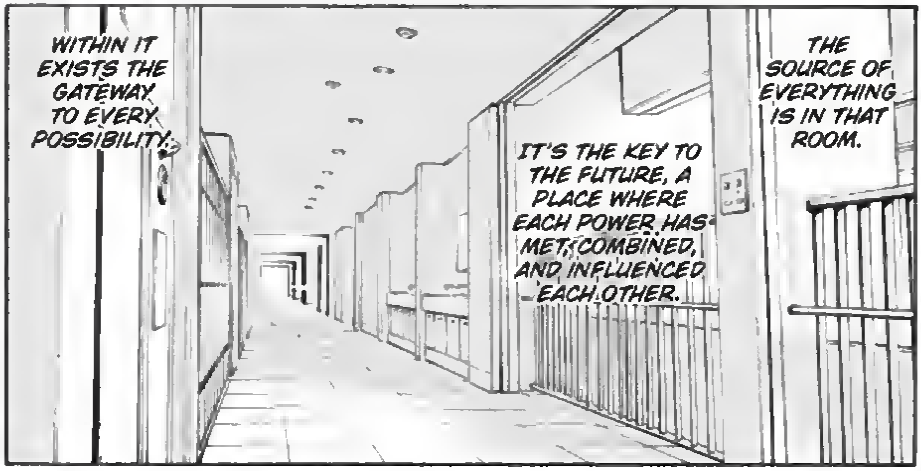

THIS IS NO LONGER YOUR WORLD.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION NOW?

SASAKI!?
AND THE TAXI...

I WONDER ABOUT THAT.
WE STILL HAVEN'T ARRIVED AT OUR FINAL DESTINATION.
...A TRAP!
YOUR REALITY, YOUR SENSE OF HOW THE WORLD WORKS—SUCH THINGS DO NOT APPLY HERE.
SHE'S THE REASON WE SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING YOU ALL THE WAY HERE.
I'LL HAVE TO THANK SASAKI.

WE'LL NEED HER TO WORK FOR US AFTER THIS.
OF COURSE ...
I DOUBT SHE KNOWS SHE WAS BEING MANIPULATED INTO DOING THAT.
ONCE THAT'S TAKEN CARE OF, YOU'LL ALL BE FREE TO GO.
AND THEN YOU CAN FLIRT WITH HER ALL YOU WANT.
タ
TA (DASH)
FUJIWARA, YOU BETTER APPRECIATE MY SELF-CONTROL.
WOULD YOU BE SATISFIED IF I SAID THANK YOU?
LET'S GO, SHALL WE?

β—12
TO THAT SHABBY LITTLE ROOM YOU CALL YOUR HOME BASE.


WITHIN IT EXISTS THE GATEWAY TO EVERY POSSIBILITY.
IT'S THE KEY TO THE FUTURE, A PLACE WHERE EACH POWER HAS MET, COMBINED, AND INFLUENCED EACH OTHER.
THE SOURCE OF EVERYTHING IS IN THAT ROOM.

I SUPPOSE IT MIGHT BE HARD FOR AN ARCHAIC HUMAN LIKE YOU TO UNDERSTAND.
THE PROCESSES OF BOTH PROGRESS AND STAGNATION ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY EXTANT, THERE.
KO (CLACK)
OR PERHAPS YOU COULD CALL IT A WEDGE.
KO
DON'T WANT TO EITHER.
YEAH, I DON'T GET IT.
KO
WHA... HUH?
NO, I...
KO
KO
TACHIBANA.
YOU KNEW THIS, AND YOU BROUGHT ME HERE?

THAT ROOM HAD LONG-SINCE BECOME ITS OWN SPECIAL DIMENSION.
WITH ALL THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS AND POWERS THAT HAD MET, CLASHED, AND ANNIHILATED EACH OTHER THERE, IT MIGHT EVEN BE NORMAL, IN A WAY.
LIKE IT HAD REACHED A SATURATION POINT.
THIS IS FUJIWARA'S SCENARIO... WITH KUYOH BACKING HIM UP.
KYOKO TACHIBANA DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING.
FOR THE SAKE OF OUR FUTURE.
SHALL WE GO, THEN?
AND SETTLE ALL OF THIS.

TO
(TAP)
HEY, FUJIWARA ...
THERE'S SOME-ONE...
...INSIDE!
KO
(KNOCK)

KON
KON
KON
KON
KON (KNOCK)
α—12
THE DOOR THAT'S SO FAMILIAR FEELS LIKE PANDORA'S BOX.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
OPEN IT...!?